DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 962 EA 025 447

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TITLE The Distribution of Leadership at Classroom Level: Snapshots from Three Classrooms at Hollibrook Elementary School.
INSTITUTION National Center for School Leadership, Urbana, IL.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO DV-0001
PUB DATE [93]
CONTRACT R117C80003
NOTE 33p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Center for School Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1208 W. Springfield Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801 ($4).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Environment; *Classroom Techniques; *Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Effectiveness; *Organizational Climate; Program Implementation; Student Participation
IDENTIFIERS Spring Branch School District TX

ABSTRACT

During the 1991-1992 school year, a case study of leadership was conducted at Hollibrook Elementary School (Spring Branch, Texas). Five themes were identified that reflected the schoolwide norms for interaction--collective strength, trust/responsibility/accountability, community of learning, risk taking, and self-fulfillment. This paper presents findings of a followup study that was conducted from 1992 to 1993. The study sought: (1) to determine in what ways these five themes were evident in the classrooms; and (2) to identify what the teachers, administrators, and students did to operationalize these themes in the classroom. Data were collected through observation of and interviews with four teachers (two pairs) involved in team teaching. Findings suggest that the five schoolwide themes were transmitted in the classroom through the classroom structure, words and actions, the curriculum, instruction, and assessment techniques. The transmission of these themes resulted in a classroom culture that closely reflected the school culture--an environment in which all students actively participated in curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions. Findings suggest that school reform efforts resulted in the distribution of leadership roles among staff and faculty, which led to the distribution of leadership roles among students. Appendices contain two figures and the interview protocol. (LMI)

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EA 025 447

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Deliverable:
Culture and Climate

DV-0001

The Distribution of Leadership at Classroom Level: Snapshots from Three Classrooms at Hollibrook Elementary School

by: Marlene Johnson, Ed.D.

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Committed to Leadership and Learning

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The Center is funded by a grant from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Grant No. R117C80003). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the National Center and authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting agency.

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The Distribution of Leadership at the Classroom Level: Snapshots from Three Classrooms at Hollibrook Elementary School

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This work was supported by the Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement Grant No. R117-C80003. The opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Education.

ABSTRACT

During the 1991-92 school year, a case study of leadership at Hollibrook Elementary School was undertaken. The faculty and staff of Hollibrook Elementary were selected because of their public commitment to a set of guiding principles for reform and their state and nation-wide reputation for having made progress toward putting these principles into practice. The questions addressed during the first year of data collection focused on how leadership came to be defined and negotiated for the faculty and staff of Hollibrook Elementary.

Analysis of data led to the identification of five themes that reflected norms guiding actions and interactions: collective strength, trust/responsibility/accountability, community of learners, risk-taking, and self-fulfillment. Interpretation of these themes resulted in a typology for studying shared leadership within an organization. Within this typology three areas of leadership, within which leadership opportunities were facilitated, were identified. These included 1) instructional -- with the focus on the act of teaching, 2) organizational -- with the focus on climate, vision, and structure/governance, and 3) professional -- with the focus on generating and utilizing knowledge. The purpose(s) of the second year of this study, which is covered in the following report, were to 1) determine in what ways these themes, identified at the school-wide level, were evident in the classrooms, and 2) to identify what, specifically, the teachers, administrators, and students did to operationalize these themes in the classroom. Four teachers involved in team teaching arrangements were studied. One pair of teachers included a first/third grade combination, while the second pair included two first grade classes -- one bilingual (Spanish dominant) class and one English-speaking class.

Analysis of year-two data suggested that the five themes were transmitted in the classrooms studied through 1) the classroom structure, 2) words and actions, 3) the curriculum, 4) instruction, and 5) assessment techniques. The transmission of these themes resulted in a classroom culture that reflected closely the culture of the school. In these classrooms, the result was an environment where all students were actively involved in curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions.

The variety of leadership roles assumed and facilitated at the school-wide level by faculty and staff members were also evident at the classroom level for students. In all three classrooms, opportunities for students to lead in setting the climate, direction, and

structure resulted in organizational leadership roles for students. Through a flexible curriculum and utilization of a variety of instructional strategies, other leadership opportunities were made possible for students who assumed leadership roles which contributed primarily to the instructional process. Lastly, the flexibility of curriculum and instructional strategies also permitted students to assume leadership roles which permitted them to share personal knowledge with others and generate new knowledge.

The findings of this study suggest that reform efforts at Hollibrook Elementary School, which resulted in the distribution of leadership roles for faculty and staff members at the school-wide level, could also be traced to a distribution of leadership roles for students within the three classrooms studied. While these results cannot be generalized to other classrooms within this school or other schools, the initial findings warrant further investigations of school reform efforts in relation to leadership roles for students at the classroom level.

INTRODUCTION

Background

During the 1991-92 school year, four case studies of leadership within two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school were undertaken by researchers from the National Center for School Leadership (NCSL). These schools included Hollibrook Elementary School in Spring Branch, Texas; Dr. Charles E. Gavin Elementary School in Chicago Heights, Illinois; Cross Keys Middle School in Florissant, Missouri; and Roger L. Sullivan High School in Chicago, Illinois. These four schools were selected because of their public commitment to a set of guiding principles for reform and their state, or nation-wide, reputation for having made progress toward putting these principles into practice. The results of these case studies were made available along with a cross-case analysis in the form of technical reports (Polite, 1993; Grant, 1993; Diedrich-Rielly, 1993; Johnson, 1993; Zenz, Schacht, Clift, and Thurston, 1993).

While these cases provided insight into how leadership was defined, negotiated, distributed, and enacted in each of these schools, the focus was on leadership at the school-wide level. Observations of classrooms and interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrators provided confirmation that changes had taken place at the school-wide level; however, questions still remained as to the connection between this school-wide leadership and what it has meant for students within classrooms. With this underlying question in mind, Dr. Mary Polite and I agreed to continue studying our original sites, Cross Keys Middle School and Hollibrook Elementary School, respectively, during the 1992-93 school year.

Purpose of the Study

In both the Cross Keys and the Hollibrook cases, analysis of data led to the identification of themes that reflected norms guiding actions and interactions for the two faculties. Identification and interpretation of these themes resulted in the positing of two typologies. Within the Cross Keys case, a "typology of leaders" (see Appendix A) was suggested, and in the Hollibrook case, a "typology for studying shared leadership within an organization" (see Appendix B) was presented.

The purpose of the follow-up research conducted during the 1992-93 school year was to explore how a teacher, within a school that has made a commitment to change, interprets and demonstrates the mission/essence of this change within an individual classroom. The

primary question addressed was How do broader issues of school reform translate into classroom practice? More specifically: 1) In what ways were the themes, identified in the first year on the school-wide level, evident in the classroom?, and 2) What specifically did the teacher, administrators, and students do to operationalize these themes in the classroom?

During the first year, observations had been conducted in numerous classrooms throughout the building. These observations were, however, general in nature. In order to examine more closely how school-wide reform efforts, undertaken by the Hollibrook faculty and staff, translated into classroom practice, more in-depth data at the classroom-level was necessary. The intention was not to seek generalizability from classroom to classroom, but rather to understand how one teacher brings the mission/essence of a school-wide change effort into his/her classroom and what, ultimately, this means for the children within this classroom.

Recognizing that it would be impossible for one person to collect this detailed data on a school-wide basis, the decision was made to focus on one or two classrooms. The selection process, then, became especially critical. It was important that the teacher(s) selected had 1) thoroughly understood the mission of the change efforts, and 2) demonstrated efforts to bring this mission into the classroom. In order to identify the most likely candidates, input from the faculty was solicited. Following a staff development meeting, at which the findings of the case study were shared with the Hollibrook faculty and staff, this question was posed:

"The Secretary of Education will be visiting your school next Monday and can spend one hour in a classroom. Being that you want him to see what the Hollibrook mission is all about, whose classroom would you like him to see?"

Three classrooms were identified the most often by approximately the same number of respondents. All three of these classrooms were team teaching situations, thus, six teachers had been identified. These six teachers were approached to determine willingness to participate. Four of the six teachers agreed to participate. One of the teams declined because they were implementing a new program in their classroom and were concerned that it might be too disruptive to the students.

Description of the School and Two Teams

Hollibrook Elementary School is located in Spring Branch Independent School District within the metropolitan area of Houston. During the 1991-92 school year, the faculty and staff of Hollibrook served 954 of the 27,110 students enrolled in the district. One of twenty-two elementary schools in a district with four high schools and seven middle schools, the student population of Hollibrook includes 90% minority (primarily Hispanic/Latino), of which 92% are on free or reduced lunch.

The first pair of teachers participating in the research included a third and first grade teacher who had combined their two classrooms for the first half of the 1992-93 school year. During the previous year, the third grade female teacher [Ms. Shin] had served as a cooperating teacher for the first grade male teacher [Mr. Young], who was then a student teacher. When the male teacher was hired, the two teachers agreed to team teach together. Up until approximately December, the first and third graders sat at tables together, received instruction together, and worked cooperatively to complete tasks and projects. This arrangement remained until late in the Fall of 1992. At this point the teachers gradually began to separate the classes.

The second pair of teachers included two female first grade teachers [Ms. Jones and Ms. Lane] -- one bilingual class and one regular English-speaking class. Although they had planned and interacted on the same grade level during the previous year, this was their first year to team teach together.

Data Collection and Analysis

The students and teachers from both teams were observed during the 1992-93 school year. Each of the eighteen observations, conducted between January 13 and May 26, 1993, were recorded in one of two ways. Either detailed field notes were taken, with as much verbatim recording of both actions and words as possible, or the classroom was videotaped (Videotaping was conducted on six separate days.). Following the observations and/or videotaping, the field jottings and videotapes were transcribed into detailed field notes. For the first three observations, copies of the field notes were provided to the teacher(s) who had been observed for their input and response(s). Due to time constraints, this procedure was used for only the first three observations. Near the end of the school year, one to one and a half hour interviews (see Appendix C) were also conducted with the four teachers. These interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and returned to the interviewees for any changes, deletions, or additions.

Data analysis was on-going during data collection. Field notes were read repeatedly in an effort to identify patterns and themes. Whenever possible, follow-up questions were asked of the teachers to challenge initial interpretations. At the end of data collection, the themes identified from the first year of research were used as categories for content analysis. This analysis served as the basis for the results section of this report, which was shared with the teachers for their feedback.

RESULTS

Five Themes Revisited

Analysis of the data collected during the first year of this two-year research project resulted in the identification of five themes that were representative of the norms regulating actions and interactions for the Hollibrook faculty and staff. These themes included 1) collective strength, 2) trust/responsibility/accountability, 3) a community of learners, 4) risk-taking, and 5) self-fulfillment. These themes, which are briefly described in Table 1, were important because they represented the culture of the Hollibrook community, providing insight into how leadership came to be defined and enacted at a school-wide level.

Table 1

Themes Reflecting Norms Guiding Actions and Interactions

COLLECTIVE STRENGTH	belief that everyone (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members) were needed to realize the Hollibrook "vision"; belief that collectively the members of the Hollibrook community could accomplish any targeted goal
TRUST/RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY	belief that all members of Hollibrook would utilize their knowledge and expertise in a responsible manner to work toward the goals of the organization; belief that all members of Hollibrook were accountable for their actions
COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS	belief that all the members of the Hollibrook community were life-long learners responsible for creating a collaborative learning culture
RISK-TAKING	belief that taking risks was necessary and desirable in working toward accomplishing the Hollibrook goals
SELF-FULFILLMENT	belief that all members of Hollibrook should be allowed to utilize their knowledge, skills, and creativity which would allow them to feel fulfilled as individuals

Analysis of year two data supported the presence of these themes at the classroom level There was also evidence that the four teachers studied transmitted these themes within the classrooms via 1) the classroom structure, 2) words and actions, 3) the curriculum, 4) the instruction, and 5) assessment techniques. In this section quotes from students and

teachers, and "snapshots" of observations made in the classroom are presented along with interpretations as to what these observations meant in terms of the five themes identified.

The Classroom Structure

When analyzing data regarding classroom structure, the two words that repeatedly came to mind were "*flexibility and freedom*." Whether talking about use of space, time, or classroom management, the students and teachers appeared to exercise a great deal of control over the establishment of each. In the sections that follow, each of these components of classroom structure (space, time, and classroom management) is examined in relation to the five cultural themes -- collective strength, community of learners, trust/responsibility/accountability, risk-taking, and self-fulfillment.

Entering Mr. Young's classroom, I find the class is writing in their journals. Sixteen students are spread around the room. Two are curled up on the couch; one student is underneath the drawing table; two sit on chairs in front of the room; the remainder are at round tables at various locations around the room. All of the students appear to be writing or reading their journals. Mr. Young is conferencing with a male student about what he has written. He concludes by saying, "Super," and gives him a hug.

In Ms. Lane and Ms. Jones's classroom, Ms. Lane is on the floor with a group reading a story related to Cinco de Mayo. The students do choral reading. They read the pages in both Spanish and English. Ms. Lane asks a student for help in pronouncing a word in Spanish. The student models it for her and she repeats it. She follows up by asking what the word is in English. A student responds, "battle." On the other side of the room, Ms. Jones is helping a student in one center. The students are copying something in both Spanish and English. She has a young girl reading in Spanish to her. As I scan the room, the other children are busying working in other centers. Some students write stories and illustrate them. Some are working on a flag activity. All of the activities center around Cinco de Mayo.

In Ms. Shin's room the students are picking up on an activity they had started earlier -- making class flags. The class is divided into groups of four to five students who are working at round tables bordering two sides of the classroom. As the students interact, some stand, some lean over the tables semi-kneeling on chairs, and others sit.

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Space.

The snapshots of these three classrooms provide insight into how space was utilized in all three rooms observed. Ms. Shin's and Mr. Young's rooms, which were adjacent, served as the "living area" for both classes. Frequently students from one room would move into the other class area to find a spot to work alone or with others. In all three rooms there was an open area which provided a space for the class to come together as a whole. There was also areas where the students could work at round tables in small groups. Lastly, there were areas where students could seek refuge alone or with a friend. Ms. Shin and Mr. Young found these areas by removing doors from closets and putting bean bag chairs inside. They also provided these areas with couches and chairs. The students found similar spaces by crawling under tables or seeking corners. The students had many options in defining the space in which they wished to work. This was true not only in terms of where the student chose to move to within the classroom, but also of how the student utilized the space once he or she arrived there. Seldom were students seen sitting in chairs with their feet planted on the floor. Most often the students sprawled on their stomachs, laid on their back and sides, or curled up in whatever way they were most comfortable.

When asked about what they hoped to accomplish through the use of space in their classrooms, the similarities in intent were obvious among the teachers:

"It is really an open-type room with lots of space...I like to meet with the kids on the floor and really pull them together as a group and work closely that way. So I have a lot of area that I can do that in. Then the tables are kind of in the outskirts so that when they do need to go and work, they are kind of spread out and they can work within their groups. And, also, so they can have a reading area -- just places to meet wherever they choose to." (Ms. Shin) "It is a very flexible room. I can take two minutes and move everything and rearrange it any way I want or any way the children want...whatever we need it for...I wanted a lot of group work. I wanted a lot of communication between the kids, and I didn't want them sitting alone by themselves doing this individual work where they couldn't compare or talk it out with another student...I wanted the children to be able to work together and to work cooperatively...I also wanted the children to feel comfortable and unthreatened...It is what the kids want. If they don't want the tables for one point, I give them the option. Then we take the tables out, and they just use the floor and lapboards." (Mr. Young) "...the development of the language was a real motivator for us to do this arrangement because we wanted the Spanish dominant monolingual

students to pick up more English, and we thought they would do this through their peers...We want them to help one another. I think it is important. They learn a lot from each other.We talk to them about that. Especially during center time we say 'Who do you ask first? Who do you think can help you?...It is important for them to learn how to work in a group because that is expected in society. You really need to learn how to work with a group so you can get a job and be successful in the world. There are times when they have to do individual work, but during chamber time and math time it is working in a group unless we're doing a test." (Ms. Lane and Ms. Jones)

The use of space for instruction was not limited to the classroom areas. In numerous instances these teachers moved their students outside to read, explore, and collect specimens for experiments. Likewise, flexibility and freedom were evident in moving into other classrooms and bringing in other classes as resources and/or to share activities. This was evident in the HITS (Humungous, Intelligent Team of Students) group which involved third, second, first, and kindergarten children, both English and Spanish speaking, coming together each Friday for 45 minutes to share books they wrote or read and to experience thematic units.

Time. The control that students and teachers exercised in the use of space was also evident in the use of time. What was not evident was the traditional scheduled blocks of time for subject areas. While routines were observed in all three classrooms, the only times that were set and followed without exception were lunch, music, and physical education. This control over use of time was confirmed in comments made by the teachers:

"I decided and I finally figured out...I like long blocks of time because then whatever you are doing can either continue or you can stop it. Regardless of what you are doing, you have time to fit in other things...Some days you are not going to need the whole hour, but most days you are going to need a little more because of the sharing time...it is real important that they have that time. So I try to really not limit myself to really segmented blocks of time where I have to stop and start something else -- be more flexible." (Ms. Shin)

"...as long as I taught my kids the essential elements...I could do anything I wanted in the classroom. I just had to schedule it around p.e. and music. But I could do anything I wanted in the classroom basically at any time. That was fantastic...I would give them [students] the time...one of the good things about working across the curriculum...it allowed me to lengthen the time of a study..." (Mr. Young)

This freedom and flexibility in using time was observed frequently as twenty to thirty minute blocks of time would be utilized for one or two students to share stories they had written or books they had read. It was also obvious when teachers set aside plans and seized an unplanned opportunity for instruction as it arose. Such was the case when Mr. Young capitalized on the loss of a student's shoe during recess to engage in a writing activity and the estimation lesson prompted by a visit from a puppy named Bear. Although no formal system of data collection was attempted, there was also evidence that this control over the use of time influenced the wait time afforded students when responding to questions. Frequently, the teachers were observed waiting twenty or more seconds for individual students to respond to a question. Seldom was a student observed passed over because he/she could not respond within a given time. In those few instances where a lengthy wait time was not enough, students were afforded more time by coming back to them later.

There were, however, occasional instances where limitations to the use of time were imposed upon individual students. This happened sometimes when the whole class had finished except for one student and it appeared that the teacher determined that for the sake of the group it was time to move on to something else. It should be noted, however, that the flexible use of time in the classroom always permitted the student the option to return to the task at another time.

Classroom management. In examining "classroom management," both the managing of daily routines and activities within the classroom and the application of behavior management techniques were considered. In the area of managing daily routines and activities within the classroom, there was stong evidence that the students played a very active role.

In Mr. Young's classroom, the students assumed responsibility for taking care of daily record-keeping tasks, typically assumed by the classroom teacher. Here the students recorded lunch count, collected lunch and ice cream money, and assumed responsibility for reporting this information to the cafeteria staff. Mr. Young noted that, at first, the students made some mistakes and caused some confusion as they reversed numbers, however, he also told how they learned from their mistakes and built confidence in their successes. In both Ms. Shin's and Mr. Young's classrooms, students assumed responsibility for placing items in their portfolios or writing boxes. Likewise, students in

Ms. Shin's room kept records of the books they read which the teacher later assessed for grading purposes.

In the area of behavior management, students appeared to be given a great deal of freedom. Students moved freely around the classroom to take care of their needs. On one occasion a first grader who had just lost a tooth, in Mr. Young's classroom, got up, went to look in the mirror, placed the tooth in a bag, placed the bag in his tote tray, got a drink, and returned to the group. All of this was done without permission from the teacher or interruption to the group. Similarly, during a lesson observed, a student got up, went over and ground coffee beans, set up the coffee maker, and returned back to the group.

In all three classrooms, the students did not need permission to move around or leave the classroom. During an interview this fact was shared with Ms. Shin and Mr. Young along with the question as to whether this was "purposeful." Their responses were

"Yes, and it is real hard to get them to do that, too. I mean they [students] are so used to being in a real structured classroom where they have to ask permission to do everything. It is real hard because you still have them coming up and asking if they can go to the bathroom or asking if they can get a drink. We have two water fountains in here. It is just like -- you can make these decisions...I think that is the hardest thing you have to work on is getting to them to understand that they can make decisions -- and good decisions...they don't have to ask if they can do this or that -- if they can sit next to someone. They are really frightened about that." (Ms. Shin)

"Yes, they know they are very free to do what they want in here. I'm not one of those people...who have a set bathroom time when they take their children out. They line up and waste ten or fifteen minutes going to the bathroom. Here I have a bathroom pass. They take the bathroom pass. If they abuse it, they know that they are not going to be able to use it. They can go at recess and that is that." (Mr. Young)

What was not evident in the three classrooms were an abundance of teacher directions. Typically, the students were told what they had to accomplish (i.e. it is time to get ready to go home, it is time to go to lunch), and they made the decisions as to what steps were necessary to accomplish the task. For instance, following a mother's presentation on fossils, students were told that they could go look at the fossils placed on the floor. No specific directions were given as to how this should be accomplished. Yet, the following snapshot was taken:

Small groups of students examine the fossils together. They point out to each other what they see. Six to eight students encircle the speaker, taking turns asking questions. I do not see anything I would consider inappropriate or off-task behavior. The students move without teacher direction to different fossils and back and forth to the speaker. The speaker pulls out other fossils in response to student questions. One student brings a fossil over to me. He tells me that it is a shell. Other students take turns bringing fossils and their shark's teeth over to me. One student brings a book on fossils and wants me to look at it with her. Another student joins us and we informally page through the book. She notes things that are related to what she saw in the presentation today (i.e. leaves, teeth, shells, fish). We are interrupted occasionally as other students come over to show us their shark teeth or a fossil. Each time the students listen and respond to each other. After approximately 15-20 minutes, I notice that some of the students seem to have finished and have seated themselves on the floor where they appear to be waiting for the group.

An almost identical incident was observed when an aide brought her puppy in for the students to see. Again, when instructed that they could go up and pet the puppy at the end of the lesson, the students assumed responsibility for determining the most orderly way to accomplish this without specific teacher directions.

Students also moved freely around the building without a teacher having to accompany them. Assigned helpers from Ms. Lane and Ms. Jones's classes leave to help in the kindergarten classrooms without permission. Ms. Shin's students leave for art class without her accompanying them. As Ms. Shin's students head down to the cafeteria at lunch time, three students finish up a task, joining them later. When Mr. Young gets held up with a parent phone call, his class returns from music on their own and sit in a group waiting for his return. During the course of data collection, students from other teachers' classrooms were also observed working without direct teacher supervision in the computer lab, on the stage, and in the resource center.

During data collection, there were no behaviors observed that I would describe as "serious infractions" to school rules. In fact, rarely did there appear to be a need to reprimand a student. On one occasion, when students in Mr. Young's class were working in small groups, one group appeared to not be following the class rules.

Mr. Young responded by telling the group, "First, you need to apologize to Maria, who was working very hard over here (Maria was reading with Mr. Young.)." In

addition to reprimanding the students verbally, Mr. Young took away the privilege of working together for that group. After five minutes he talks with the students about what it was like working alone (The students indicate they did not like working alone) and allows them to go back to working together.

Similarly, on a few other occasions I observed teachers ask the students to leave the group. In these instances, the students went over to the side of the rooms where they remained until they returned themselves back to the group ready to work.

Summary. In all three classrooms flexibility and freedom were observed in how time and space were organized and used and classroom management was established. This freedom and flexibility allowed the students and teachers opportunities to make choices. This could be interpreted as communicating a sense of "trust." The students were trusted to be "responsible" for making choices and accountable for making the right choices.

Through the classroom structure, a message was also conveyed that the class was to function as a "community of learners." This community included both the students within their classrooms and other classrooms within the building. Inherent in this message was the belief that collectively the students and teachers could accomplish much more than was possible individually. In other words, the theme of "collective strength" was made evident through the classroom structure.

Words and Actions

One of the most easily identified means of communicating the cultural themes was through words and actions. In all three classrooms the themes of "community of learners," "collective strength," and "risk-taking" rang loud and clear on numerous occasions:

"...get help from your group. Work together. Three heads are better than one." (Ms. Shin)

"If you have a question, ask someone at your table. If they don't know, ask someone at another table...Great job! You are really learning from your mistakes." (Mr. Young)

"We are working as a group helping each other...You've got four bodies in your group...help each other..." (Ms. Shin)

"Good idea, these are things I didn't think of. That is why we are doing it together..." (Mr. Young)

"...this is great! We are working as a group to get this out." (Mr. Young)

The value attached to group efforts was confirmed in the area of classroom management. If the students were to be reprimanded for anything, it was typically for their failure to work as a group. The snapshot taken following a center activity illustrates the importance the teachers placed on group efforts:

"You were supposed to do this as a table. So I shouldn't hear four different estimations unless you just adamantly disagreed. But I didn't see that. I see everybody did something on their own. I heard several people say, 'I'm done.' There is no 'I' in this. It's a table thing. It's not an 'I' thing. I told you that before you got started. I did not want to see one person working by themselves. This is a group effort. Three heads are better than one. What I'm hearing when I ask for estimations and exact amounts is, 'Well, I had this. I had that.' It's a 'we' thing. Unless you just thought your group was completely wrong, and you went on your own and wrote, 'Well, my group said fourteen, but I did not agree with them at all, and I came up with ten.' At least then I know you talked with your group." (Ms. Shin)

As the teachers stressed the importance of working together, they also continuously communicated, through words, that learning was to be fun and purposeful in terms of life-long learning. Seldom was a lesson observed that phrases such as the following were not made:

"You are in school to learn. You are in school to have fun..." (Mr. Young)

"College is in your future..." (Ms. Shin)

"You will be graduating from college in a few years..." (Mr. Young)

"I see some geniuses in my class...The things that you were doing, the webs that you made, the way you worked with each other...it was superb!" (Mr. Young)

"I want you to learn from this, and I want you to have fun...There is going to be a lot of talking. Discuss it...record what you have learned in the tape recorder." (Mrs. Shin)

"...future Aggies [local university]..." (Mr. Young)

Through their actions the teachers also confirmed their commitment to the themes being communicated to the students. Whenever the students were doing writers' or readers' workshop, the teachers wrote or read along with the students. The teachers shared drafts of their writings, talking about the process they too went through. The message conveyed was that "We all are continuous learners." The teachers' actions allowed students to assume many roles traditionally conducted by the teacher. When students read to the

groups, the teachers did not continuously correct any mispronunciations or errors. These were most often pointed out by other students. Likewise, when students asked questions, the teachers allowed other students to answer the questions, providing information when no other source seemed to be available.

Through their actions, the teachers also conveyed that working with others provides opportunities to play with others. Therefore, teachers and students were observed playing tether ball together during recess; munching on pretzels during group work; talking about the school baseball team that had been recently started; and discussing upcoming wedding plans for Mr. Young. Wedding invitations were also extended to the students, and teachers arranged transportation so that students could attend. Being a student in any of these classrooms was supposed to mean much more than acquiring information. Participating as a member of these learning communities also provided opportunities for every individual to feel a sense of worth, to shine, to feel "self-fulfilled" as individual strengths were recognized as contributing to the success of the group.

The Curriculum

Central to the curriculum in all three classrooms were books. Unlike in many classrooms, however, these books were not textbooks. In fact, during only two observations were textbooks used for instruction. Instead, the curriculum revolved around student reading and writing. As Mr. Young pointed out in his room one day, there were over fifty books made by students for others to read. In talking about the language arts curriculum, Mr. Young and Ms. Shin captured much of what the other teachers expressed:

"The language arts curriculum and the guide doesn't say specifically what you have to do in the classroom...It basically suggests, and it says you should be working developmentally. We don't do the skill and drill. It gives you opportunities/strategies to use. I find what is successful, what they [students] like to do, and I'll keep doing those." (Mr. Young)

"we have a language arts guide that is very general...it doesn't really tell you what you have to teach and when you have to teach it...just ways to go about what you are interested in teaching. Science and social studies for third grade has certain things that they need to cover, but I still found them pretty general. I could fit them into thematic studies that we wanted to do...we planned with the kids and did a fairy tale unit...we did a continent study with an entire pod area...we did a self-concept study which went into community work...our curriculum is more or less what we choose to teach as

long as we are getting in the EE's [essential elements set by the state education agency]..." (Ms. Shin)

The general nature of the curriculum guides allowed the teachers to move toward a more integrated curriculum. In the snapshot that follows, a simple calendar activity becomes an opportunity to incorporate skills and knowledge across the curriculum:

Mr. Young takes over for the student who had started the calendar activity for the class. Mr. Young asks, "What does the '3' in 3/31/93 stand for?" He waits thirteen seconds for one student to respond. He has her go to the front of the class with a pointer and point to the months for the class. The class chants the month names as the girl points to the words. Mr. Young asks, "What day of the week is Wednesday?" After prompting, the student still can not answer. Mr. Young asks, "Lyonnell, do you want to teach it to him?" Lyonnell goes to the front of the room with the pointer and explains how to figure out what day of the week Wednesday is. Mr. Young continues to ask questions incorporating vocabulary, counting, etc. "How many days have we been in school so far this year? Can we count by fives and land on 137? Why not?" Referring to a pocket with money in it at the front of the room, Mr. Young asks, "How much money do we have?" The students respond," $1.36." They add a penny for today. Then Mr. Young asks, "How much money will that make?" A student responds, "1.37." Mr. Young leads the class through counting the money, reviewing the value of a penny, nickel, dime and quarter. The children count the money with Mr. Young out loud.

Then Mr. Young asks, "What about the popsicle sticks? "The popsicle sticks are counted by hundreds and tens. Mr. Young asks about groups of tens, hundreds, and number of ones. Mr. Young asks a girl about tally marks kept. Donna explains that they are the days they have come to school. Mr. Young throws her a marker to go put a tally mark up. Mr. Young asks about the weather. They record sunny, cloudy and rainy days. They have run out of room to mark sunny days. Mr. Young refers to the idea April had the day before to reuse stickers by writing two on them. Mr. Young asks her to come to the front of the room to explain to the class. April leads them in counting sunny days - 2, 3, 4...10...

For all four teachers, this freedom in developing curricular materials translated into more flexibility for building on the interests and products of the students. As mentioned earlier, a lost shoe was quickly converted into a writing lesson. Likewise, in Ms. Jones's class a student shared a book she had written, and Ms. Jones and Ms. Lane seized this

opportunity to talk about characters, problems, and solutions. Ms. Lane asks, "*What is one thing you like about Melody's story? What is something we could add or change to make it even better? What are you going to do next with this story, Melody?*"

By putting student interests and knowledge at the center of the curriculum, the teachers confirmed the importance of learning as a community. Similarly, the strengths of individuals were frequently noted out loud to the group. These messages served to confirm the importance of each individual and recognized how the group could "collectively" utilize the strengths of individuals. For individuals this translated into a feeling of being valued and led to self-fulfillment as their contributions were recognized.

Instruction

The two snapshots that follow have been chosen because they represent the type of instructional strategies observed most frequently across all three classrooms throughout data collection. Examination of these actual classroom events provide valuable insights into how the teachers transmitted the school-wide themes into their classrooms for the children.

In Ms. Shin's room the students move into small groups for center activities related to seeds and plants. I focus first on a group with three girls and one boy. They pull out the reading materials from the center tray.One girls suggests that they take turns reading. Another girl signals that they will go around the table in a counterclockwise pattern. The first student starts reading. The others have their books open and appear to be following. They take turns reading a page. When a student hesitates with a word, the others help. Another group is headed outside to collect leaves. A group of five boys are on the floor. They first take everything out of the center tray. One student reads the directions for the first activity while the others follow along. Another group of three boys and one girl are reading nearby. Ms. Shin checks on the group of boys, saying, "Where do you start?" The boys explain that they have already read the directions for the first activity. One student explains that they are just separating the items from the center. Another group of two boys and three girls are busy looking at leaves under different types of magnifying materials. I hear students using words like "Chinese tallow, sycamore, and live oak." The students make comments to each other about what they are observing. Ms. Shin circulates among groups listening. The group from outside returns with the leaves they have collected. They head down to the library with their leaves to find out what kind they are. The group which was examining leaves are now making leaf

rubbings. Ms. Shin comes over to check their progress and make sure that they are following the directions. The group with five boys are cutting a sponge into a snake shape. One student notes that a scrap piece of sponge looks like a fish. Once the shape is finished, the boys wet the sponge and start to push seeds into the sponge. They double check their progress with Ms. Shin. The boys cover the sponge with saran wrap. One student brings it over to the windowsill. They move on to the next activity.

Cooperative grouping was one of the most frequently used instructional strategies incorporated in all three classrooms. The preceding snapshot is representative of the many center activities observed. In each instance the teacher served as "facilitator" rather than "expert" as the students worked together to acquire knowledge. For the students this meant that they had to assume responsibility for organizing tasks and working cooperatively to successfully complete the center activity. Most centers required both an individual and group product. The teachers explained that by having both a group and individual product, participation of all group members was more likely.

On numerous occasions individual students were asked to assume the role of teacher in leading the instructional process. Sometimes this meant coming to the front of the group to lead the class or show them how an answer was determined. In the snapshot that follows, Mr. Young's students were asked to take over as teachers within small groups.

The students and Mr. Young have just spent three minutes reviewing number sentences for subtraction facts under ten. Mr. Young continues, "Today I'm going to ask for five teachers. You are going to go into groups and the teachers are going to have paper, markers, and the option to use blocks. They [teachers] are going to teach and help the rest of the kids in their group with subtraction. So we'll have five teachers and about three, maybe four, students in each group...It is a big responsibility if you are one of the teachers. It is a big responsibility as a student." Mr. Young explains that at the end each group should write subtraction problems that will go to the rest of the class to solve. He adds, "This is how I check what you have done in your group. So not only will I be up walking around and watching you, we'll also have these math problems." Mr. Young starts to talk about what he expects from the teachers: "If you volunteer to be a teacher, you need to be able to do subtraction -- and not just the two minus one equals. You need to be able to do problems above ten." He stops, indicating a change, "Well, actually, you don't have to. You do have to have the ability to learn though. There are a lot of questions that you ask me that I don't know the answers to, and I'll make you figure

it out by yourselves." Mr. Young goes on to explain that by working together the teacher and student can solve problems that they might not be able to solve alone. He then selects popsicle sticks with the students' names on from a can to determine who will be the teachers (In the remainder of this snapshot the term "teacher" refers to the students who have assumed the role of acting as teacher for small groups). The students move into their groups without being told. The teachers within each group begin to ask subtraction facts of their students. Every teacher allows the students to use the blocks. In one group a student gets up, goes over to ask Mr. Young if he can go to the restroom. Mr. Young tells him, "...Go ask your teacher." The student returns to his group, raises his hand, and asks permission. The teacher tells him to go, "...but hurry back." As I scan the room, I see all of the groups working. In all of the groups some students stand or kneel on their chairs to get closer to the materials. I observe students being given problems and solving problems. One student gives an incorrect response and the teacher has the students use the blocks to demonstrate the problem. The student realizes his error. Mr. Young circulates throughout the room jotting down notes. As lunch time approaches, he calls over the teachers, saying that it is up to them to decide how to line up the students for lunch. The teachers move quickly back to their tables. One teacher has her students line up in a straight row and move over by the entrance to the classroom. The other groups dismiss their students without lining up. In all cases, the groups push in their chairs, and leave their materials in an organized manner in the center of the tables.

In these two snapshots and the many snapshots that were generated during observations, it was evident that no matter what instructional strategy was employed, the expectation was that all students should be actively engaged in the instructional process. The focus was not on passive listening, but rather on active participation. In many cases this meant that the teachers made on-the-spot adjustments to the instructional strategies being used. Often these adjustments came about as a direct result of suggestions made by students. Such was the case when Mr. Young's students requested "choral reading" rather than merely listening to a story.

Through the selection of a number of instructional strategies that allowed for active involvement in the instructional process, all five of the themes were transmitted. The instructional strategies confirmed the importance of utilizing the knowledge, skills, and expertise of all of the members of the class. By making group products a part of center activities, the importance of the "collective strength" was demonstrated. Students were

also encouraged to take risks as they sought alternative ways to complete tasks or solve problems. By utilizing these types of instructional strategies, opportunities for individuals to find ways in which they could contribute were increased, thus allowing for a great chance for all students to find self-fulfillment.

Assessment

In each of the classrooms observed, assessment was an on-going, shared process. Whether assessing individual or group academic or behavioral performance, the focus was more on formative rather than summative evaluation. Likewise, the purpose was not to arrive at a numerical grade but rather to provide information as to knowledge gained and future knowledge to be acquired. During data collection there was no evidence of numerical grades on any papers the students completed. However, in one data point Ms. Shin did refer to a book jacket that the students were creating saying, *"This is something you are going to be responsible for, and it is going to be a major grade."*

In most cases assessment was conducted through a variety of means. In a discussion with Ms. Lane and Ms. Jones, the question was posed as to how they assessed the student's progress especially during center activities:

"Well, we know the essential elements that we are covering in the different centers. Sometimes, we keep their work from the centers with anecdotal running records. We use observation and anecdotal records on each child. You might note that a student is speaking more English...also we use portfolios. We always do a monthly self-portrait where they draw their picture and write about themselves. Also, we keep running anecdotal records and a math checklist...and tapes of the students reading to us. We are fortunate because we have a report card that is very developmental in first grade."

The students were also actively involved in on-going assessment of their work and the work of others. As students completed drafts of their writing, they read their work to the class. The other students then assessed what was done well and made suggestions as to what additional information could be provided or clarified to improve the work. Students also participated in assessing their performance in center activities. Following centers the students were frequently asked to give an assessment of how their group performed. In Ms. Lane and Ms. Jones's class the students were even asked to rate their performance, which was tied into a reinforcement system.

In some cases, unplanned opportunities to assess student behavioral and academic performance occurred, and the teachers capitalized on these. Such was the case when Mr. Young's class returned from a school-wide awards ceremony, and one student questioned why he received only one award while another student had received four.

"The student asks, "Why did I get only one award? Mr. Young responds, "OK, why do you think you got one? Think about it." The student says, "I tore Lisa's airplane up." Mr. Young asks, "What did you do during silent reading?" The student responds, "Not reading." Mr. Young continues, "What did you do during writer's workshop?" The student confesses, "Played around." Mr. Young asks, "Does that clue us in on something? Do you see a difference? Now what happens the next six weeks if you start working during writer's workshop, if you stop playing around during silent reading? What do you think is going to happen at the next six week's award ceremony?" The student responds, "I might get two or three awards." Mr. Young adds, "I also want you to remember something. I would love to give everybody an award, but you have got to work hard"

The assessment techniques, utilized by the students and teachers, communicated a "collaborative" rather than "competitive" environment. Likewise, assessment was defined in a manner that allowed it to be used as a means of improving rather than merely evaluating performance. Absent were the one-shot, success versus failure dilemmas so often experienced in traditional written tests. This, in turn, encouraged risk-taking because opportunities for improving performance were always present. The chances for student success and self-fulfillment were increased because more avenues of demonstrating successful performance were made available.

SUMMARY

In the first year of this study, leadership was examined at the school-wide level to determine how the faculty and staff of a "successful" school, Hollibrook Elementary, came to define leadership and negotiate leadership roles. Analysis of data led to the identification of five themes that reflected norms guiding actions and interactions: collective strength, trust/responsibility/accountability, community of learners, risk-taking, and self-fulfillment. Interpretation of these themes resulted in a typology for studying shared leadership within an organization. Within this typology were three areas of leadership within which leadership opportunities were identified. These included 1)

instructional -- with the focus on the act of teaching, 2) organizational -- with the focus on climate, vision, structure/governance, and 3) professional -- with the focus on generating and utilizing knowledge.

The purpose of the second year of this study was to 1) determine in what ways these themes, identified at the school-wide level, were evident in the classrooms, and 2) to identify what, specifically, the teachers, administrators, and students did to operationalize these themes in the classroom. Four teachers involved in team teaching arrangements were studied. One pair of teachers included a first/third grade combination, while the second pair included two first grade classes -- one bilingual (Spanish) class and one English-speaking class.

Analysis of year-two data suggested that the five themes were transmitted in the classrooms studied through 1) the classroom structure, 2) words and actions, 3) the curriculum, 4) instruction, and 5) assessment techniques. The transmission of these themes resulted in a classroom culture that reflected closely the culture of the school. In these classrooms, the result was an environment where all students were actively involved in curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions.

The variety of leadership roles assumed and facilitated at the school-wide level by faculty and staff members were also evident at the classroom level for students. In all three classrooms, opportunities for students to lead in setting the climate, direction, and structure resulted in organizational leadership roles for students. Through a flexible curriculum and utilization of a variety of instructional strategies, other leadership opportunities were made possible for students who assumed leadership roles which contributed primarily to the instructional process. Lastly, the flexibility of curriculum and instructional strategies also permitted students to assume leadership roles which permitted them to share personal knowledge with others and generate new knowledge.

The findings of this study suggest that reform efforts at Hollibrook Elementary School, which resulted in the distribution of leadership roles for faculty and staff members at the school-wide level, could also be traced to a distribution of leadership roles for students within the three classrooms studied. While these results cannot be generalized to other classrooms within this school or other schools, the initial findings warrant further investigations of school reform efforts in relation to leadership roles for students at the classroom level.

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APPENDIX A

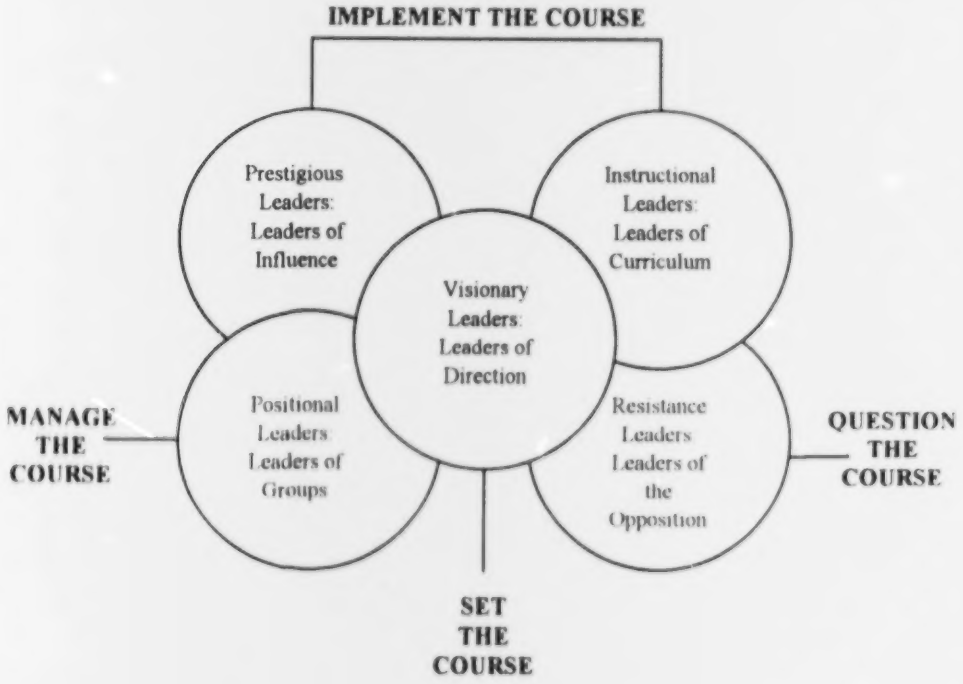
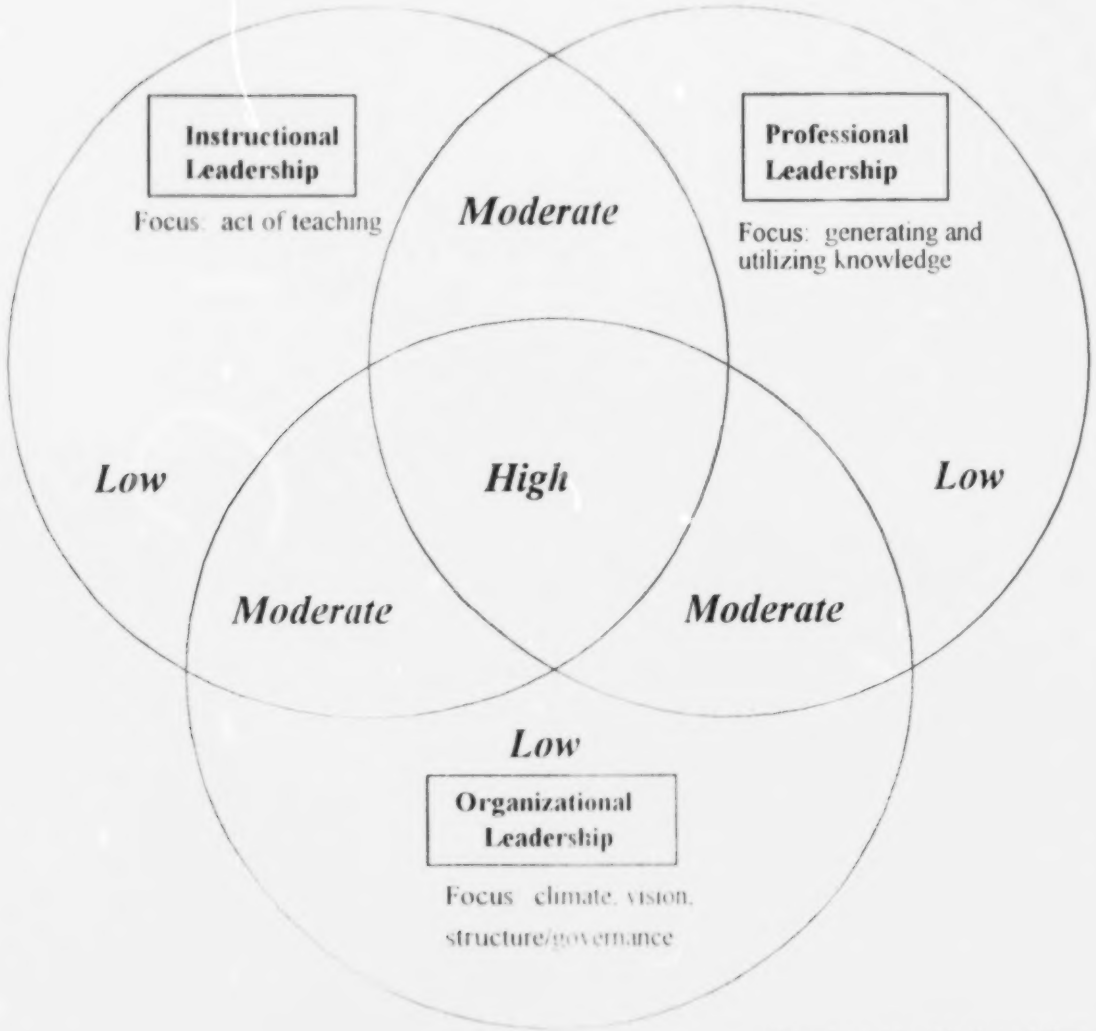

IMPLEMENT THE COURSE
Prestigious Leaders: Leaders of Influence
Instructional Leaders: Leaders of Curriculum
Visionary Leaders: Leaders of Direction
MANAGE THE COURSE
Positional Leaders: Leaders of Groups
Resistance Leaders: Leaders of the Opposition
QUESTION THE COURSE
SET THE COURSE

Figure 2 Modified Typology for Studying Shared Leadership Within Organizations



Developed by Marlene Johnson 8/92

APPENDIX C

PHASE II: FORMAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Physical Arrangement

1) Describe the physical arrangement of your classroom.
2) Why did you physically arrange your classroom the way it is?
3) What did you hope to accomplish by the physical arrangement?
4) Was there anything that helped or limited the physical arrangement you desired?

Schedule

1) Describe your daily schedule in the classroom.
2) What did you hope to accomplish with the use of time in your classroom?
3) What helped or impeded your efforts to arrive at the schedule you desired?

Curriculum

1) Describe your curriculum.
2) What did you hope to accomplish through the curriculum?
3) Was there anything that helped or impeded what you hoped to accomplish with the curriculum?

Confirmation and Expansion of Observations

1) How do you teach a first grader to read? To write?
2) I observed that the children move around without permission. Is this purposeful? If so, what is the purpose?
3) I observed that the children often seek help from each other. Why do you think this happens?
4) I observed that the children spend a great deal of time reading, writing, and working independently in centers. How do you assure that the children are learning during this time? How do you assess your children's progress? How do you assign numerical grades?